APPENDIX D

MONTANA WILDLIFE & TRANSPORTATION PARTNERSHIP PROJECT PROGRAM

STEERING COMMITTEE PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA

The Committee has developed these criteria to guide their scoring and assist in the evaluation and selection of projects for implementation through the Program. Scoring for each section will range between 0 and 5 (0, 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5). Each section will receive one consensus-based score from the Committee. Bulleted items below do not directly relate to points awarded for each category. The items included and level of detail in the information provided by the applicant is expected to be commensurate with the scope and scale of the project proposal.

I. APPLICATION INFORMATION (Not Scored)

A. Applicant Name, Affiliation, and Contact Information (mailing address, phone, email)
B. Contact Person and Contact information (if different than applicant)
C. Landowner and/or Lessee Name(s) and Contact information (from MT Cadastral)

II. PROJECT INFORMATION (Not Scored)

A. Project Name
B. County
C. Highway and Mile Markers
D. Geographic Location
E. Provide a brief overview of the project

III. NEEDS and BENEFITS (Max 20 points, Weighted x 3 = 60 points)

A. Purpose and Need of project (Score 0-5)

- Clearly articulated a compelling challenge to be addressed (need)
- The location of the project will appropriately address the challenge
- Clearly articulated solution that will appropriately address the challenge (purpose)
- Clearly articulated expected benefit from the project (safety/connectivity)
- The proposed project is sufficiently justified and reasonable

B. Supporting Data (Score 0-5)

- Clearly articulated the data used
- Data used supports purpose and need of project
- Utilized relevant and sufficient data for broad scale assessment
  Examples may include:
  - Montana Wildlife and Transportation Planning Tool (MWTPT)
    - Conflict / Barriers (MWTPT NAC 1, 5)
    - Movement / Conservation (MWTPT NAC 2, 3, 4)
    - Identified the score of each of the project highway segments within the project area and the average score over all of the segments in the project area. Described how the Planning Tool informed the selection of the general project area.
  - Scientific/practitioner literature, research
- Utilized relevant and sufficient data for finer scale assessment
  Examples may include:
  - Habitat security
  - Professional consultation
  - GPS collar data
  - Field (boots on the ground) observational data
  - Localized assessment / research / models
  - Camera trap data
  - Citizen science data

C. Project Proposal (Score 0-5)

- Provided comprehensive description of all features and strategies included in the project
- Features and strategies clearly related back to purpose and need
- Included details on dimensions, location, extent, length, etc. for each feature/strategy
- Identified whether proposing new infrastructure and/or retrofit of existing infrastructure

D. Expected Benefits (Score 0-5)

- Clearly articulated benefits regarding safety
- Clearly articulated benefits regarding wildlife connectivity / permeability in the broader landscape
- Utilized relevant data to illustrate benefits, such as:
  - Expert opinion
  - Scientific/practitioner literature, research supporting benefits
  - Clearly articulated change in condition / consequences of the project

IV. IMPLEMENTATION Criteria (Max 20 points)

A. Landowner/community support (Score 0-5)

- Provided project endorsements
- Demonstrated engagement of community working group(s) or partnerships(s)
- Provided evidence of other landowner/community involvement and support
- Demonstrated communication with adjacent and/or directly affected landowners

B. Land protections / Land Use (Score 0-5)

- Discussed and/or referenced land or resource management agency or tribal plans, guidance, or policies conducive to the project
  Examples may include:
  - Project area adjacent to public land, protected land, or private land under conservation easement
  - Planning and growth policies conducive to the project
  - Planned/projected development conducive to the project
  - Project area within State Wildlife Action Plan Focal Areas
  - Project area within SO 3362 MT Action Plan Priority Area
  - STIP projects conducive to or considered in the project
- Plans, guidance, and policies referenced are compatible with proposed project

C. Planned projects / Complementary efforts (Score 0-5)

- Complementary efforts are planned, underway, or have been completed in the vicinity of the project
  - Identified status and implementing entity
- Clearly articulated the extent to which the scope, timing, and impact of these efforts will benefit the success of the proposed project

D. Partnerships in place and role of each partner (Score 0-5)

- Project proposal includes multiple partners
- Clearly identified the role each partner plays(ed) in development, implementation, and/or funding of the project

V. FUNDING Criteria (Max 10 points)

A. Cost estimate (Score 0-5)

- Clearly identified the total cost of project implementation (including development, design, and construction)
- Completed the budget template
- Identified major line items in the proposal
- Used the appropriate average bid prices
- Consulted with and identified professionals for assistance

B. Funding contributions and sources (Score 0-5)

- Clearly described the funding plan
  - Identified sources of funding
  - Identified amount of funding from each source
  - Identified status of funding from each source (secured, pending, possible)
  - Identified timeframes and steps needed to secure pending or possible funding
- Completed the budget template
- Identified remaining gap between cost and revenue, if one exists
- Described opportunities and potential for procurement of additional funding

VI. FEASIBILITY/OPPORTUNITY Criteria (Max 25 points)

A. Engineering / technical feasibility (Score 0-5)

- Clearly described which engineering and/or technical experts (MDT, FWP, Tribal, other) they worked with and what assistance or information they provided in assessing and evaluating the design/construction feasibility of your project proposal.
- Clearly identified red flags that resulted in a change to proposed project features, location, or extents,
- Clearly identified items that may require further investigation and evaluation in the feasibility study phase, or other input that informed the project concept and proposal.
- Documented any endorsements, concerns, or potential drawbacks of your project identified through this consultation.

B. Biological / Ecological feasibility (Score 0-5)

- Clearly described which biologists, road ecologists and/or technical experts (MDT, FWP, Tribal, other) they worked with and what assistance

or information they provided in assessing and evaluating the appropriateness of the project proposal in addressing an identified need.
- Clearly identified other input or suggestions for improvements or modification to the project concept that may assist in more appropriately addressing the challenge, fulfilling the stated purpose and need, identifying the appropriate solution, and supporting the expected benefits associated with the project.
- Documented any endorsements, concerns, or potential drawbacks of your project identified through this consultation.

C. Proposal for construction (Score 0-5)

- Clearly explained who/which entity you are anticipating will administer the bidding and construction of the proposed project (e.g., MDT, local/tribal government, or a private entity).
- If not MDT, included contact information and other pertinent information regarding the experience and ability of this entity to bid and/or construct your project.
- For less complex projects, identified need for an encroachment permit and described if the work will be performed from the adjacent land (outside of MDT R/W) or within MDT R/W and to what extent.

D. Proposal for post-construction monitoring (Score 0-5)

- Clearly articulated a post-construction monitoring plan appropriate to stated purpose and need (conflict/connectivity) to evaluate
  - Expected benefits
  - Lessons learned
  - Unforeseen impacts
  - Adaptive management recommendations
- Clearly identified personnel/entity(ies) responsible for post-construction monitoring
- Clearly identified any novel mitigation strategies or designs, or target species for which there is limited available research regarding use of crossing structures
- Monitoring proposal appears potentially feasible based on the information provided

E. Proposal for short- and long-term maintenance and operation (Score 0-5)

- Clearly articulated a short-term maintenance proposal and responsible entity(ies) for expected day to day maintenance items relevant to features proposed, including schedule and method of inspection

- Clearly identified expected long-term maintenance activities, identified affected features, and the responsible entity(ies)
- Clearly articulated an operation proposal and responsible entity(ies) and identified activities that may require additional agreements
- Maintenance proposal appears potentially feasible based on the information provided